CERTIFIED 1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT 2 CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL 3 4 PETITION NO. 1410 5 Greenskies Clean Energy, LLC Petition for a 6 declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General 7 Statues 4-176 and 16-50k, for the proposed 8 construction, maintenance and operation of a 9 3.0-megawatt-AC solar photovoltaic electric generating 10 facility on two parcels at the Elmridge Golf Course 11 located to the east and west of North Anguilla Road at 12 the intersection with Elmridge Road, Stonington, 13 Connecticut, and associated electrical 14 interconnection. 15 16 VIA ZOOM AND TELECONFERENCE 17 18 Public Comment Hearing held on Thursday, 19 October 1, 2020, beginning at 6:30 p.m. via remote 20 access. 21 22 Held Before:

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JOHN MORISSETTE, Presiding Officer

Reporter: Debra A. Chasse, CSR #055

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1	Appearances:			
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3	Council Members:			
4	ROBERT HANNON			
5	Designee for Commission Katie Dykes			
6	Department of Energy and Environmental			
7	Protection			
8	LINDA GULIUZZA			
9	Designee for Chairman Marissa Paslick			
10	Gillett, Public Utilities Regulatory			
11	Authority			
12	ROBERT SILVESTRI			
13	DANIEL P. LYNCH, JR.			
14	MICHAEL HARDER			
15				
16	Council Staff:			
17	MELANIE BACHMAN, ESQUIRE			
18	Executive Board Director/Staff Attorney			
19	ROBERT MERCIER			
20	Siting Analyst			
21	LISA FONTAINE			
22	Fiscal Administrative Officer			
23				
24				
25				

1	Appearances: (Cont'd.)
2	
3	For the Petitioner, Greenskies Clean Energy, LLC:
4	PULLMAN & COMLEY, LLC
5	BY: LEE D. HOFFMAN, ESQUIRE
6	90 State House Square
7	Hartford, CT 06103-3702
8	
9	For the Party/CEPA Intervenor Douglas Hanson:
10	GERAGHTY & BONNANO, LLC
11	BY: MICHAEL BONNANO, ESQUIRE
12	38 Granite Street
13	New London, CT 06320
14	
15	For the Party/CEPA Intervenor Proponents
16	Emplacement of Stonington Solcar (PRESS):
17	EAG LAW, LLC
18	BY: EMILY GIANQUINTO, ESQUIRE
19	21 Oak Street
20	Hartford, CT 06106
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MR. MORISSETTE: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. This remote hearing is called to order this Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 6:30. My name is John Morissette, Member and Presiding Officer of the Connecticut Siting Council. Other members of the counsel are Robert Hannon, designee of Chairman Marissa Paslick Gillett of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, Mr. Robert Silvestri -- I'm sorry. Let me go back.

Mr. Robert Hannon is designee of Commissioner Katie Dykes, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. We have Linda Guliuzza, designee for Chairman Marissa Paslick Gillett of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, and we have Robert Silvestri, Michael Harder, and Daniel P. Lynch, Junior, and staff members of the Siting Council are Melanie Bachman, executive director staff attorney; Robert Mercier, siting analyst, Lisa Fontaine, fiscal administrative officer.

Please note: There is currently a statewide effort to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. This is why the Council is holding this remote public hearing and we ask for your patience. you haven't done so already, I ask that everyone please mute their computer audio and/or telephone now.

This is a continuation of a remote public hearing that began at 2 p.m. this afternoon. A copy of the prepared agenda is available on the council's petition No. 1410 webpage, along with the record of this matter, the public hearing notice, instructions for public access to this remote public hearing and the Council's Citizen's Guide to Siting Council Procedures.

This hearing is held pursuant to the provisions of Title 16 of the Connecticut General Statutes and the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act upon a petition from Greenskies Clean Energy, LLC for a declaratory ruling for the proposed construction, maintenance, and operation of a 3.0-megawatt-AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility on two parcels at the Elmridge Golf Course located to the east and west of North Anguilla Road at the intersection with Elmridge Road, Stonington, Connecticut.

This petition was received by the Council on June 4, 2020.

The Council's legal notice of date and time of this remote public hearing was published in The Day on September 1, 2020. Upon this Council's request, the petitioner erected signs at the proposed site located at Elmridge Road and North Anguilla Road

so as to inform the public of the name of the petitioner, the type of facility, the remote public hearing date and contact information for the Council, (website and phone number).

is reserved for the public to make brief statements into the record. These public statements are not subject to questions from the parties or the Council and members of the public making statements may not ask questions of the parties or the Council. In fairness to everyone who signed up to speak, these public statements will be limited to three minutes and will become part of the record for Council consideration. Please be advised that written comments may be submitted by any person within 30 days of this public hearing.

As a reminder to all, off-the-record communication with a member of the Council or a member of the Council's staff, upon the merits of this petition, is prohibited by law.

I wish to note that the parties and intervenors, including their representatives and witnesses, are not allowed to participate in the public comment session. I also wish to note for those who are here and for the benefit of your friends and neighbors

who are unable to join us for the public comment session, that you or they may send written statements to the Council within 30 days of the date hereof, and such written statements will be given the same weight as if spoken at the hearing. Please be advised that any person may be removed from the remote public comment session at the discretion of the Council.

We ask each person making public statements in this proceeding to confine his or her statements to the subject matter before the Council and to avoid unreasonable repetition so that we may hear all of the concerns you and your neighbors may have. Please be advised that the Council cannot answer questions from the public about the proposal. A verbatim transcript of this remote public hearing will be posted on the Council's petition No. 1410 web page and deposited at Stonington clerk's office for the convenience of the public.

Before I call on members of the public to make statements, I request the petitioner to make a very brief presentation to the public describing the proposed facility: Ms. Wolfman or Mr. Gagnon or Mr. LeMarche.

MS. WOLFMAN: This is Gina Wolfman.

I'm the project developer for Greenskies and just a

little bit of background on the company. We're

Greenskies Clean Energy, and we're a limited liability

company located in North Haven, Connecticut. That's

where our office is based. We're an offshoot of

Greenskies Renewable Energy, which was founded in 2009

up in Middletown, Connecticut. And GCE, or Greenskies,

develops, finances, constructs, operates, and maintains

renewable energy projects throughout the U.S.

So, as was mentioned, this is a 3.0-megawatt-AC solar energy facility at the Elmridge golf course. We have two project areas, east and west. The east project site, or parcel, will house a proposed 2 megawatts, one megawatt each system separately metered, and the west will have a 1 megawatt system here at west of North Anguilla Road.

Existing conditions or existing use is a 27-hole golf course comprised of 250 acres. The proposed project on the east side will occupy about 10 acres of 87 of this parcel, and on the west that's about 5 acres out of 26. And the existing use is a 27-hole golf course, pro shop, clubhouse with a restaurant, and it's open to the public. There's a driving range and the proposed use, in addition to our facility, would include operations of the two solar arrays and then continued operation of the golf course

with 18 holes, driving range, the clubhouse, and the pro shop still open to the public.

We will be leasing the property.

It's a 21-year lease with two 5-year extension options, and Greenskies was awarded 3 zero emission renewable energy credits, and we have agreements with Eversource. They'll be producing the energy.

Our interconnection will be from existing three phase along Elmridge Road and North Anguilla. Final design will be determined by Eversource when we move through the final engineering phase. Existing conditions were determined and assessed. Wetlands were delineated, phase 1 environmental assessment was conducted and 1A and 1B archeological study, cultural resource survey, and plans were all designed based on the outcome of all the due diligence efforts.

So I'd like to pass it off to Mike Gagnon, our project civil engineer.

MR. GAGNON: Sure. Again, for the record, my name is Mike Gagnon. I'm senior civil engineer with Milone & MacBroom. I would just like to give the folks an overview of the project areas starting off with the west site, which is located on the westerly side of North Anguilla Road. This

particular map that's in front of you is essentially
the index plan or overview plan that shows the two
project areas in relation to each other, as well as the
surrounding neighborhoods and roadways.

So starting off with the west site, the compound area or, better yet, the area that's going to be occupied by the panels and the equipment, is approximately 4.8 acres. The reason for the strange site of the perimeter fencing is we are required to locate the project outside of the 100-foot upland review area to the wetland resource areas.

And, in addition to that, we've provided a stormwater management basin located along the southerly end of the array area, again, designed to attenuate or reduce peak flow as a result of the development from the site.

The perimeter will be -- or the fencing will consist of 7-foot high chain link fence that will surround the compound area. The electrical equipment is located at the easterly end of the compound area to facilitate interconnection out to North Anguilla Road. The main access, obviously, will be at the same point, excuse me, to the compound area.

In terms of the overall dimensions of what the actual panels are, the rows themselves, or

the panels, what we call tables, are actually about 12 to 12 and a half foot wide looking top down, and then in between the rows it's approximately 13 feet. All of the area underneath the panels will remain as grass.

Typically on these projects we'll use like a wildlife conservation seed mix such that these facilities are mowed maybe once or twice during a season.

In terms of the east array, again, very similar in terms of the layout of the panels in terms of the spacing that I was talking about. We are providing a stormwater management basin along the westerly side of the array area, again to capture the runoff from the site.

In addition to that, we are constructing a diversion swale. That's represented by kind of like the tail figure that's shown extending out of the southerly end of the basin. The purpose of that is to divert some of the runoff from within the site towards the stormwater management basin. So, again, overall we can achieve those net peak runoff flows to simulate existing conditions or not to exceed existing conditions.

The equipment at this particular site will be located pretty much at the northeasterly corner kind of up by the clubhouse area where the

interconnection will run across the fairway underground as shown by the line going out towards North Elmridge Road, and at that point it will be connected to a series of utility poles to facilitate the interconnection on North Elmridge Road.

Some of the other features of this particular site, we are providing landscaping or buffer plantings, particularly around the southerly end of the facility, and then we're also providing some additional plantings along the north fence line as well.

In terms of grading for these two sites, the west site, there's a little bit more grading that has to happen in order to level off the terrain that's associated with the golf course, and that's represented by the contour lines that are shown just north of the stormwater basin; whereas, on the easterly site much less grading needs to happen. Really the intent is that we will utilize the existing ground cover as much as possible.

There is a few areas where we actually have to reduce the hills that are part of the golf course in order to accommodate the construction of the racking of the solar facility. So that's basically it in a nutshell, in terms of a project description. Thank you.

1 MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Ms. 2 Wolfman and Mr. Gagnon. 3 I will now call on Warren Horton and 4 Marilyn Horton to make a public statement, and they 5 will be followed by George Rezendes. Warren Horton and 6 Marilyn Horton, are you present? 7 (No response.) 8 MR. MORISSETTE: They don't appear 9 to be with us at this moment, so we'll come back to the 10 Hortons. 11 George Rezendes followed by Karl 12 George Rezendes, are you available? Kehrle. 13 MR. REZENDES: I am George. My name 14 is George Rezendes. I live at 5 Fairway Court in 15 Pawcatuck, Connecticut, and I'm an abutter to the 16 Elmridge Golf Course. I'm speaking today in opposition 17 of the Greenskies 3-megawatt utility scale solar 18 facility petition. 19 I want to start by saying I'm not 20 opposed to renewable energy. I firmly believe we need 21 to be proactive in fighting climate change; however, in 22 doing so, we must keep in mind the total system's 23 approach that's informed by the perspective of all 24 stakeholders.

My first concern is that this is in

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my backyard. The design and placement of this utility scale solar facility puts it within hundreds of feet from my home, along with other residential homes. I doubt any of you who sit on this Council could honestly say you would want this facility in your backyard.

Despite testimony by Greenskies to the contrary, we will have a clear view of the east site from our property. Simply put, a utility scale solar facility of this magnitude does not belong in a residential neighborhood.

The USEPA emphasizes the reuse of potentially contaminated property, ground fills, landfills, and mining sites for renewable energy, encourages the development of such sites that are solar instead of green space. This preserves open space as a carbon sink and for the use of other ecosystems.

Next, this utility scale solar facility will undoubtedly have a very negative impact on the property values in the surrounding community. The petitioner has contended from the very beginning of this process that property values will not be impacted, but this is not true. A study released by URI, recently as yesterday, shows that residential homes less that 528 feet from a utility scale solar facility, on average, experienced a 7 percent loss in value, with

some homes experiencing losses as high as 15 percent. Ironically, that reduction could be moot, because the prospect of even being able to sell a property this close to a solar facility is unlikely using the commonsense test.

The question I have for each of you on the Council is would you buy a house in the 500 to \$800,000 price range if there were a utility scale solar facility located within hundreds of feet of your backyard? Lost home values will have a significant economic cost to the surrounding neighborhood and community.

Siting this utility scale solar facility in close proximity to groundwater protection overlay district places the community's source of drinking water at risk. Testing has shown that the solar panels proposed leach lead, a fact that Greenskies acknowledges. What happens when you consider this leaching for 9,600 panels over 25 years? Is it worth the risk of compromising the quality of this community's drinking water? Concerns about stormwater management are immense.

MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Mr.
Rezendes. Your time has expired. If you would like to submit additional comments, you have the ability to do

so and you have up to 30 days from the close of the public hearing to submit additional comments. Thank you at this time for you participation.

MR. REZENDES: Thank you for your time and attention.

MR. MORISSETTE: We now call on Karl Kehrle followed by Richard Gee. Mr. Kehrle.

MR. CARL: I'd like to thank the

Council for the opportunity to speak. My name is Karl

Kehrle, and my wife, Kristen, and our daughter, Lauren,

live at 6 Fairway Court, which is one of the abutting

properties. We were among the first residents in the

neighborhood in 1994 when there were two different

levels of land available to purchase and even though

the plot adjacent to the golf course cost a lot more,

we were so excited about possibly living in this

beautiful area. We scraped together our savings, we

borrowed money from our parents, we were able to

purchase what was our dream lot. We paid \$30,000 more

for this lot because it was on a golf course on Fairway

Court.

Like my neighbor, I want to be clear, I'm not opposed to solar, but I'm strongly opposed to the placement of this power plant in a residentially zoned area. And besides the loss of the

natural beauty of the area, I'm opposed for two main reasons; the home value reason and also the significant safety unknowns. I mean, as by the person before me mentioned, our home is currently worth more because it's located on the golf course. So I, too, worry that our home could lose 10 to 15 percent of its value overnight. I think this is grossly unfair to all the residents in the neighborhood and the surrounding homes, and I don't think anyone on the call would want this to happen to them.

Secondly, I do have grave concerns about the safety of these panels and their effects on the environment and also the wildlife. I think there's just too many unknowns to be placing this plant.

During the town meeting, Greenskies said that solar panels have not been in service long enough to know about the cost of decommissioning them, so how, then, can we feel confident in the long-term safety of these almost 10,000 panels, most of which are manufactured in China, which is the world's worst polluter. I'm very worried about, not only what's supposed to be on the inside of these panels, but also what's actually on the outside, chemicals that may be leftover from the manufacturing process.

I believe that's a major reason why

the first solar company that investigated this site chose not to pursue a project in this beautiful but fragile environment.

So, in closing, I believe that the Stonington Land Trust has expressed interest in purchasing this property, and I keep thinking about what a beautiful location this would be for hiking trails or bike paths, and therefore, I respectfully ask the Siting Council, please, please seek a mutually beneficial solution by finding a site in a safer, commercially zoned area away from precious aquifers, away from homes, families, and children, and I thank the Council for their time and consideration.

MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Karl. We appreciate your comments.

Next we have Richard Gee followed by Nancy McAndrew. Mr. Gee?

MR. GEE: I would second all of my neighbors' concerns, primarily the aquifer. I have water coming right out of my backyard. That's how close the water table is to me, and I'm adjacent to hole No. 5 along the golf course. This water comes out of the ground 365 days a year, and I have a stream that runs adjacent to that also. Constant water flow. And all of my neighbors downstream across the street, they

have not been heard from. All of their drinking water comes out of their well. Yes, I have town water, but all of the neighbors on Elmridge, on North Anguilla, and whoever else taps into this aquifer, they're going to be at risk. Maybe not for the next five years or ten years, but beyond that when the panels start to reach end of life, what happens to the panels and what has since happened to the aquifer and the downstream environment?

The housing values, it's a key and well-known fact that it affects housing value in a negative fashion, and I concur with my fellow neighbors that there is a significant impact if you live right next to the course, because the noise from the inverters, no one's mentioned that. I don't know much of the science on it, but I went and visited other solar sites in Rhode Island, and there is a significant danger just being near the site. It's of high voltage, stay away, don't even come near the fence.

And then the final thing, which really concerns me, is the end of life of the panels. Who in this state will take these nonfunctional panels and properly dispose of them and take them apart, grind them up? I have no idea. This is a science. Again, everyone is saying well, we haven't been there yet.

1 That's of a concern that is a big unknown to me, Mr. Morissette. 2 3 And then to put a solar panel right 4 in the middle of a residential neighborhood is also 5 somewhat unprecedented. 6 So that concludes my thoughts, and 7 thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. 8 MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Mr. Gee. 9 We appreciate your comments. 10 Next will be Nancy McAndrew followed 11 by Oliver LeBras. Ms. McAndrew? 12 MS. McANDREW: Can you hear me? 13 MR. MORISSETTE: Yes, we can. Thank 14 you. 15 My name is Nancy MS. McANDREW: 16 I am a real estate broker of seven years, 17 and I also happen to live at 27 High Ridge Drive. I 18 would like to briefly address the real estate. 19 I, too, would like to talk about the 20 article that was published yesterday in The Providence 21 Journal from the University of Rhode Island that was 10 22 years in the making in regard to the impact of 23 commercial solar armed property value. But since 24 everyone seems to know about that, I'm going to jump

right in to our particular area right here.

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If you haven't actually been here to see the proposed location of this property, you can't appreciate what a terrible choice it is for our community. The proposed location is at the very epicenter of residential homes. There are subdivisions on three sides, lovely country roads, such as Elmridge and North Anguilla, and especially the High Ridge subdivision, which is particularly impacted with the homes that sit along the golf course, and they will suffer the greatest loss of value.

I think that the numbers that are given in the report from URI are low for the High Ridge area. I would say that the people along the golf course will experience value more than 10 percent off of their homes. Location has always doubled the value of real estate. We all hear location, location, location. If a buyer has a choice, they're not going to choose to live next to high tension electrical wires or sewer treatment plants or public works departments, or even something as innocuous as a water tower, railroad tracks, or the grocery store, and buyers will not choose to live next to a solar plant, even if they're searching for a green home. It's not the same thing.

When the High Ridge subdivision was

developed next to the Elmridge Golf Course, an association was formed to sustain property values insuring that the homeowners were buying -- what they were buying into would maintain its value. The lots that look over the golf course were the premium lots, and they were more expensive. We all know why. They have the beautiful views of the golf course. The association protected the property values and the golf course enhanced it.

These homeowners have invested in that land, built beautiful homes, and maintained them for decades. Commonsense will tell you that the sale price of a home will be far less overlooking the Greenskies solar plants than if it enjoys the vista over the golf course. We don't know any data for that.

Since the value of any property is actually what a buyer is willing to pay for it, I would suggest that a buyer is most certainly going to pay more for a house overlooking a beautiful golf course than a house overlooking a 3-megawatt solar plant.

Real estate has a comparable system of value, and High Ridge is an entity. To let the properties on the golf course become diminished in value, the entire neighborhood becomes tainted. A chain reaction of reduced value would then ensue beyond

1 High Ridge and other areas surrounding the solar plant. The golf course has been a protection value for all of 2 3 its neighbors. 4 MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you, Miss 5 McAndrew. Your time has expired. 6 MS. McANDREW: Thank you for 7 listening to all of us. 8 MR. MORISSETTE: If you would like 9 to submit additional comments that you may have, you 10 have 30 days from the close of the hearing. 11 MS. McANDREW: Thank you. 12 MR. MORISSETTE: Thank you. 13 next is Oliver LeBras followed by Evan LeBras. Oliver 14 LeBras? One more time, Oliver LeBras? I don't see him 15 on the screen. We'll move on to Evan LeBras. I don't 16 see him on the screen either. We'll come back to that. 17 Moving on to Stuart Cole followed by 18 Stuart Cole? Stuart Cole? Kevin Torres. 19 Next we'll go to Kevin Torres 20 followed by Warren and Marilyn Horton. Kevin Torres? 21 Hearing none, we'll start at the 22 beginning. 23 Warren Horton and Marilyn Horton 24 followed by Oliver LeBras. Warren or Marilyn Horton? 25 Oliver LeBras or Evan LeBras?

Hearing none, those are the public comments we have this evening.

The Council announces it will continue the evidentiary session of this public hearing on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 2 p.m. via Zoom remote conferencing. A copy of the agenda for the continued remote evidentiary hearing will be available on the Council's petition No. 1410 webpage, along with the record of this matter, the public hearing notice instructions for public access to the remote evidentiary hearing session and the Council's Citizens Guide in Siting Council Procedures.

Please note that anyone who has become a party or intervenor or who desires -- who has not become a party or intervenor but who desires to make his or her views known to the Council may file written statements with the Council until the public comment record closes.

Copies of the transcript of this hearing will be filed at the Stonington Town Clerk's office.

I hereby declare this hearing adjourned. Thank you all for your participation.

(Whereupon, the Public Comment Hearing was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.)

1	CERTIFICATE	FOR	REMOTE	<b>HEARING</b>

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I, Debra A. Chasse, CSR 055, a Notary Public duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the foregoing 24 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original stenotype notes taken of the PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING HELD BY REMOTE MEANS IN Re: PETITION NO. 1410, GREENSKIES CLEAN ENERGY, LLC PETITION FOR A DECLARATORY RULING, PURSUANT TO CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUES 4-176 AND 16-50k, FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF A 3.0-MEGAWATT-AC SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY ON TWO PARCELS AT THE ELMRIDGE GOLF COURSE LOCATED TO THE EAST AND WEST OF NORTH ANGUILLA ROAD AT THE INTERSECTION WITH ELMRIDGE ROAD, STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT, AND ASSOCIATED ELECTRICAL INTERCONNECTION, which was held before JOHN MORISSETTE, Presiding

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of October 2020.

Officer, on October 1, 2020.

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Debra A. Chasse, CSR 055 BCT REPORTING SERVICE 55 WHITING STREET, SUITE 1A PLAINVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06062